year, the central excise duty on pharmaceutical products including drugs/medicines were reduced from 16% to 8%. Thereafter, the central excise duty on drugs/medicines was further reduced from 8% to 4% with effect from 7th December, 2008.

Vaccine for Swine Flu

161. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has taken initiatives to develop vaccine injection or medicine to prevent/cure Swine Flu;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SRIKANT JENA): (a) to (c) The Directorate General of Health Services has issued the Test License to following firms for the import of strains in respect of Swine Flue for the purpose of examination, test or analysis:

(i) M/s Serum Institute of India Limited, Pune

(ii) M/s Panacea Biotec, New Delhi

(iii) M/s Bharat Biotech International Limited, Hyderabad.

Delay in finalization of National Pharmaceutical policy

162. MS. MABEL REBELLO:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Parliamentary Standing Committee has expressed concern over delay in finalizing drug policy;

(b) whether policy aims to bring 354 essential medicines in price control;

(c) whether panel has pointed out that no headway has been made in finalization of national pharmaceutical policy and have pointed out that the policy is pending with GoMs on pharmaceutical policy for almost two years;

(d) whether he has sought Prime Minister's intervention to clear the policy; and

(e) what are the other main recommendations made by the Committee for policy and how many of its recommendations have so far been considered and accepted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SRIKANT JENA): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The Supreme Court *vide* its interim order dated 10.3.2003 in SLP (C) No.3668/2003 directed the Government, *Inter alia*, to "consider and formulate appropriate criterion for ensuring

essential and life saving drugs not to fall out of price control and further directed to review drugs which are essential and life saving in nature till 2nd May, 2003. As per the directions of the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare reviewed the National Essential Drugs List 1996 and brought out the National List of Essential Medicines 2003 (NLEM 2003). Keeping in view the directions of the Supreme Court it has been proposed in the draft National Pharmaceutical Policy, 2006 that basket of drugs for price control would be the essential medicines as contained in the NLEM 2003 (subject to certain conditions and exemptions) in addition to the 74 drugs which are at present under price control under the Drug (Price Control) Order, 1995.

(c) Yes please.

(d) Yes please. In September, 2008 the then Minister (C&F&S) has requested Prime Minister to intervene in the matter to ensure that the Pharmaceutical Policy is cleared from the GOM at an early date.

(e) Some of the main recommendations made by the Committee with the objective of making available quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses related to strengthening of drug regulatory system, price negotiations mechanism for patented drugs, reduction in trade margins, strengthening of NPPA, promotion of generic drugs, amendment to Drug (Price Control) Order, 1995 emphasis on R&D, system of pool procurement of medicines etc. The recommendations made by the Standing Committee had already been taken into consideration by the Government in the proposed draft National Pharmaceutical Policy, 2006.

Supply of fertilizers to Andhra Pradesh

163. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Andhra Pradesh had requested the Union Government to ensure supply of required quantity of fertilizers during Rabi/Kharif season 2008-09;

(b) if so, the details in this regard indicating the quantum of fertilizer released to the State so far; and

(c) by when the entire demand of the State Government is likely to be met?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SRIKANT JENA): (a) to (c) Urea is the only fertilizer which is under partial movement and distribution control of the Government. Union Government ensures availability of urea at State level. State Governments are responsible for its distribution within the State. All other fertilizers *viz.* DAP, MOP, SSP and NPK etc. are decontrolled/de-canalized since 1992. The availability of Phosphatic and Potassic fertilizers is decided by the market forces of demand and supply.

The availability of Urea, DAP, MOP and Complex fertilisers in Andhra Pradesh during the year 2008-09 are as under:-